

MEETING OF THE CALIFORNIA STATE BOARD OF FOOD AND AGRICULTURE

(ALL MEETINGS OPEN TO THE GENERAL PUBLIC)

Location: CDFA Auditorium
1220 N Street
Sacramento, CA 95814

Contact: Joshua Eddy, Executive Director
Phone: (916) 651-8423

MEETING MINUTES FOR MARCH 26, 2008

Item
No.

(1) **CALL TO ORDER**

- (a) The meeting was called to order Wednesday, March 26, 2008 at approximately 9:10 a.m. Al Montna, President of the State Board of Food and Agriculture presiding.
- (b) Welcoming remarks provided by Al Montna.
- (c) Pledge of Allegiance.

(2) **ROLL CALL**

Roll call taken by Joshua Eddy, Executive Director.

Present:

Drue Brown	Marvin Meyers	Karen Ross
Al Montna	Ashley Boren	Daniel Dooley
Adan Ortega Jr.	Donald Bransford	Ann Bacchetti-Silva
William Moncovich	David Wehner	Luawanna Hallstrom

Absent:

Thomas Deardorff II	Craig McNamara
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(3) **APPROVAL OF MINUTES – February 27, 2008**

MOTION: Board Member Adan Ortega, Jr. moved to approve the minutes of the February meeting. The motion was seconded by Board Member Karen Ross and a unanimous vote carried the motion.

(4) **OPENING REMARKS BY BOARD PRESIDENT AND SECRETARY**

Secretary Kawamura provided a departmental update to the board. Items discussed included the recent visit by USDA Secretary Ed Schafer, current status of the U.S. farm bill and an update on pest eradication activities. In addition, Secretary Kawamura outlined the state budget process for the coming months and indicated that several budgetary items will affect the agricultural industry – industry support on these items will be essential.

Secretary Kawamura also presented a letter addressed to the board requesting that organization develop a strategic vision for California agriculture (attached).

(5) **OTHER BUSINESS**

Mendota Sugar Beet Cooperative

John Diener, Mendota Sugar Beet Cooperative, requested a letter of support from the board in regards to the cooperative's application for a USDA Value Added Producer Grant.

MOTION: Board Member Bransford moved to approve the request by the Mendota Sugar Beet Cooperative for a letter of support. Board Member Moncovich seconded, the motion passed unanimously. The Executive Director was instructed to finalize the action of the board and complete necessary documentation.

(6) **PRESENTATIONS BY GUEST SPEAKERS**

All speakers provided comment on the board's initiative to develop an 'Ag Vision' for California's agricultural future.

- Ted Batkin, President, Citrus Research Board.
- Robert Tse, Director of Trade, California Department of Food and Agriculture
- Jonnalee Henderson, Policy Analyst, California Department of Food and Agriculture

(7) **BOARD DISCUSSION ON CALIFORNIA AG VISION POLICY AND TIMELINE**

The board had an open discussion on the parameters of an 'Ag Vision' policy and timeline. The following action items/motions resulted:

ACTION: Board Member Ortega requested the development of an Ag Vision kit for board members to provide individual outreach.

ACTION: President Montna requested that the Ag Vision process be formally launched at the end of the conclusion of the April board meeting.

MOTION: Board Member Ross moved to adopt SHARE document for pre-meetings as presented by CDFA staff. Board Member Meyers second – motion passed unanimously.

MOTION: Board Member Dooley moved to develop a structured list of questions and distribute them to targeted industry members for response at the April board meeting. This meeting would follow a structured interview format. President Montna second – motion passed unanimously.

(8) **COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC**

Four members from the audience provided comments.

Michael Dimock, President, Roots of Change, provided background on the Roots of Change vision statement and outlined areas the board should consider during the Ag Vision process.

Steve Shaffer, Agriculture and Environmental Stewardship, California Department of Food and Agriculture, discussed the issue of defining sustainability and suggested that energy/biodiversity be added to the draft SHARE document.

Tom Tomich, Agricultural Sustainability Institute – UC Davis, offered comments on the issue of defining sustainability and how both a rural and urban view exists on the topic. Mr. Tomich added that several similar actions are taking place with various organizations and that the board should coordinate with these entities.

Glenda Humiston, Ph.D candidate – U.C. Berkeley, provided general comments on the implementation and structuring of an Ag Vision public input process. Individuals need to feel ownership in the vision to assist in endorsing it.

(9) CLOSING COMMENTS AND ADJOURNMENT

Board Member Bacchetti – Silva provided an update to the board concerning a local (Sacramento area) dairy production issue and how several small producers lack a processor for increased dairy capacity.

Undersecretary Gomes added that capacity is a problem for the dairy industry and that the department is working closely with producers/processors on the issue.

With no further business before the Board, the meeting was adjourned at approximately 12:15 p.m.

April 11, 2008

Mr. Al Montna, President
Members of the Board
California State Board of Food and Agriculture
1220 N Street
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear President Montna and Board Members:

As the 21st century unfolds there is an agrarian revolution taking place. The culture of agriculture is expanding in all directions. Dynamic advances in conventional and sustainable technologies have created exciting opportunities throughout the 'food chain'. There are 'blooming' synergistic relationships with multiple stakeholders that seemed unrealistic just a decade ago. And yet while this new era continues to bring profound changes, there remains a clear deficiency that threatens to overturn thousands of years of progress. There are certain basic fundamentals required for the successful completion of the agricultural endeavor. When we forget the stable foundation upon which agriculture must stand, we do so, not at our own peril, but the peril of civilization itself.

In the 1913 book "Farm Management" by G.F. Warren, there is a simple but powerful inscription that states:

The requirements of a good farmer are at least four:

The ability to make a full and comfortable living from the land;
to rear a family carefully and well;
to be of good service to the community;
to leave the farm more productive than it was when he took it.

The act of farming, of raising crops or animals for food, fiber and fuel has not changed much for thousands of years. Only in this past century do we see the remarkable acceleration of the sciences and the dynamics of globalization that have created widespread benefits and...challenges for agriculture. One of the predictable and truly troubling changes has been the significant decrease in the number of people who are actively engaged in that age-old practice which delivers our 'daily bread'. In California, the fifth largest agricultural economy in the world, "***agriculture***" is becoming a poorly understood strategic function that lacks the universal support of the populations that depend on it. And while the dependency on agriculture increases proportionately to the growing global population, the lack of understanding threatens all aspects of its sustainability into the future.



In fact, the active dialogue that continues today about the concept of “sustainability” has made one thing quite clear...and that is that the future of California agriculture is anything but sustainable unless there is a comprehensive effort to understand the fundamentals upon which 21st century agriculture might stand, and then, to create a strategic plan that can help guide the state into that unpredictable future.

In your role as the State Board of Food and Agriculture, I ask that you begin this process to create a strategic plan for California agriculture, one that engages the public and our states’ farmers and ranchers. This “Ag Vision” should identify goals that we as a community of stakeholders are committed to achieve, ensuring that the agricultural fabric of our state remains dynamic and sustainable.

California has always been the land of innovation and opportunity – let us ensure that this vision of agriculture allows our state to realize its true potential. Ultimately, the future of California and our nation rests squarely upon a platform of abundance, in the areas of food, fiber and fuel that can be created out of this marvelous culture of agriculture.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'A.G. Kawamura', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

A.G. Kawamura
Secretary

cc: Joshua Eddy, Executive Director
Nancy Lungren, Deputy Secretary
Robert Tse, Director of Trade
Jonnalee Henderson, Policy Analyst